



STUDY OF PATTERNS OF HOMICIDES IN SOUTH TAMILNADU.

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ABSTRACT

Homicide means the death of one human being as the result of the conduct of another. It may be lawful as killing in self defence in certain circumstance or causing death by sheer misadventure. Murder takes place due to varied causes. In civilized countries it is seen that murder has increased in number. This is due to the fact that there are loop-holes and lacuna in our law system. It looks as though the law protects the criminal. Alcoholic consumption has increased the number of murders for petty matters. Sex jealousy, infidelity, rapes, burglary, Agricultural causes operate in murder cases. The study is done in Department of Forensic Medicine, Madurai medical College to know the various patterns of Homicides.

KEYWORDS : Homicide, murder, weapons , injuries

INTRODUCTION:

Homicide means the death of one human being as the result of the conduct of another. It may be lawful as killing in self defence in certain circumstance or causing death by sheer misadventure. Unlawful homicide is murder which is divisible into the following categories.

1. MURDER
2. MANSLAUGHTER (CULPABLE HOMICIDE)
3. INFANTICIDE
4. CHILD DESTRUCTION

Murder takes place due to varied causes¹. In civilized countries it is seen that murder has increased in number. This is due to the fact that there are loop-holes and lacuna in our law system. It looks as though the law protects the criminal.

Alcoholic consumption has increased the number of murders for petty matters. Alcoholics do not respect the law of the land, the society. He loves only the alcoholic beverage due to which his family and house are broken. If he is the bread winner, his capacity to earn comes down. Hence he commits thefts, clashes with law, assaults his wife and even murder her. Sometimes he suffers from insanity due to alcohol due to which he is compelled to criminal acts like murder. Sex jealousy, infidelity, rapes, burglary, Agricultural causes operate in murder cases.

AIM OF STUDY: The main aim is to present various factors though not all which are involved in Murder cases. An extensive study of all factors is impossible as complete history is not available at the time of investigation. Hence the study is focused to know the various patterns of Homicides i.e certain facts like motive, time of occurrence of murder, and evaluation of injuries caused to the deceased, type of weapon used, the nature of injuries, how they have proved fatal. The survival period and surgical intervention were also studied.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: From the Department of Forensic Medicine in Madurai Medical College ,thirty murder cases are selected from December 2016 to March 2017 and various factors are presented for simplicity.

DISCUSSION OF CASES:

CASE NO:1: The deceased was assaulted with Aruval. Cut injuries were noticed over the body. There were cut injuries on the head involving the scalp, fracture of skull, brain laceration associated with blood clots. Surgical intervention elevation and surgical removal of

fractured bone, done. Continuous oozing from cortical laceration has proved fatal. It is to be noted that infection has not occurred in this case.

CASE NO.2: Knife was the weapon. Incised and stab wounds were seen over the body. But the main wound was a stab involving the left side of front of chest, entering the left pleural cavity pericardial cavity – injured the left ventricle of the heart. Haemothorax was present containing 1500ml of fluid blood. Minimal haemopericardium was seen. Collapse of left lung occurred. Death has occurred instantaneously. Hence the stab wound over the chest proved fatal. It can be opined that the injury is necessarily fatal. But if a question is raised that it is always fatal, the doctor cannot assert since few subjects, after receiving such fatal injury has lived for sometime and underwent operation and survived. The latter is an exception hence the defence pleader cannot take shelter under the above exception and reduce the criminal liability of murder³.

CASE NO.3: Knife and blunt weapon were used. Stab wound present on the left side of chest. Similar to the preceding case. Abrasion and contusion were also seen on the body. Death was imminent.

CASE NO.4: knife was used in the assault. Stab and incised wounds were seen over the body. In this case – stab injury of abdomen involving the liver and stomach were present. In addition, incised wounds, abrasions were also seen on the body. Peritoneal cavity contained 2000ml of fluid blood with blood clots with rice particles. The victim has survived for one hour and fifty minutes. In this case loss of blood has taken place being about 2 litres. Hence death has taken place due to hypovolaemia and shock as a result of visceral injuries. In the above said three cases viz., PMC 639/86,640/86, 641/86 the assailant was in the habit of demanding money from shop owners every day. On a particular day he demanded Rs.50/- from a shop owner who offered a smaller amount. Hence the assailant known rowdy killed the shop owner on the spot. Subsequently he murdered the other two persons who intervened to protect the first person who obliged him with money. The trial was over and he was punished by death sentence.

CASE NO.5: Assailant with petty quarrel over small matters attacked with knife and aruval. Stab wounds and incised wounds were caused. Two stab wounds one on the left side of chest involving the upper lobe of left lung, another stab right side of chest involving the right ventricle of heart. Left side pleural cavity contained 100ml of fluid blood, right side pleural cavity contained 1000ml of fluid blood. Pericardial cavity contained 20 ml of blood. Death ensued

immediately.

CASE NO.6: There was a wordy quarrel over the burial of dead body near the accused's house. Hence the murder occurred. The assailant armed with stick gave a heavy blow to the head of the victim causing injury to right side of the scalp, depressed fracture of right side front parietal bone 8x4x1cm. Extradural, subdural, intra cerebral haemorrhage occurred on the right side. Laceration of right frontal lobe of the brain was seen. Death has taken place after a period of about 32 hours. In this case all injuries were coup injuries in nature. The blunt force was severe in velocity. Slow bleeding has occurred intracranially proving fatal.

CASE NO.7: Seven assailants attacked the opponent with wooden reeper and hands. The deceased received head injury on the right side with depressed fracture, subdural haemorrhage, cerebral laceration right side and contra coup laceration of the left side temporal lobe with blood clots. Basal fracture of right side middle and anterior cranial fossa was seen. Surgery was performed to drain intracranial haemorrhage. In spite of surgery the victim succumbed after 24 hours. The case is similar to the previous one. In this case the motive was the dog of the deceased was beaten by a girl following which the quarrel ensued.

CASE NO.8: In this case the motive was intercaste marriage. The husband with four ladies joined together with a criminal motive set fire to the wife by pouring kerosene. Superficial burns were caused. There was infection of the affected areas. The cause of death was burns shock and its effects.

CASE NO.9: Knife was used in the murder. The motive being old enmity. Incised injury over the back of chest cutting the muscles – spinal cord was injured. Healed incised wounds were seen. Meningeal infection followed. The victim was conscious. The infection has not subsided, spinal cord was further damaged. The victim survived for 13 days.

CASE NO.10: Weapon was one variety of knife, called soori knife. The deceased was an old person aged about 63 years. Multiple stab wounds were seen over the chest and abdomen. Abdominal injury has affected the hepatic flexure of large intestine. Surgery was performed. Patient lived for six days, only to die of peritonitis.

CASE NO.11: Knife was the weapon, Paramour husband was the assailant, motive was money transaction. Quarrel started in the early morning at a hotel room in which they stayed. The assailant stabbed the wife at several places viz., on the left side of upper abdomen, lower part of left chest with other incised wounds. The stab wound of abdomen injured, spleen, small intestine at multiple sites, peritoneum and left kidney. Another stab entered the left chest, injured the left lung. Peritoneal cavity contained 1800ml of fluid blood with blood clots. With the above injury the victim died almost immediately due to shock and haemorrhage. In this case multiple visceral injuries were the cause of the death.

CASE NO.12: Aruval was the weapon used. Motive was over the rape of the sister of the deceased. There were three incised wounds. Two were simple injuries. The one injury present over the front and inner aspect of left forearm lower part involved the muscle, nerves and ulnar blood vessels. The above wounds were attended to by the surgeon but in vain since the victim died after 20 hours. This fits with the statement that an injury though small involving a major blood vessel can prove fatal.

CASE NO.13: Aruval, Stick, Knife were used. The root cause of the quarrel was over cutting of tree. Multiple cut wounds, lacerations, abrasions were seen. One cut has entered the left side of chest injured the left lung. A lacerated wound was caused to the left side of the scalp. There followed extradural haemorrhage on the left side. Assailants were eight in number who attacked many persons of the deceased side. The victim survived only for 11 hours. The cause of death being shock and haemorrhage due to head injuries and lung

injury.

CASE NO.14: Knife was the weapon of offence. Motive repeated quarrels on petty matters ended in the murder. Multiple stab wounds and incised wounds were caused. The stab wounds involved the right lung, diaphragm and right lobe of the liver (one stab) and small intestine (by another stab wound over the lower abdomen) Haemothorax – 800ml of fluid blood was present. Haemoperitonium 1100ml of fluid blood with clots of blood was present. The victim died on the way to hospital. Death was due to multiple visceral injury.

CASE NO.15: Weapon used was a granite stone. Motive was illicit intimacy between the deceased and accused's wife. Hence the murder occurred. A punctured wound seen over the left mastoid region. Internally there was fracture of left mastoid bone extending to the base of skull (middle cranial fossa). Intracranial haemorrhage, subarachnoid and intra ventricular haemorrhage were seen. In this case the husband attacked his unfaithful wife night while sleeping and death occurred forthwith. It is to be noted the stone weighted 29.5 KG.

CASE NO.16: Knife was used. Assailants were two in number. They assaulted the deceased on one occasion after which the murder occurred. There was a stab wound of left thigh at its middle involving the femoral vessels. In addition simple injuries were caused. In this case death was due to shock and haemorrhage due to femoral vessels injury. Most of the bleeding was external. The victim survived a few hours only. The victim had consumed alcohol at that time. The fact is the assailant wanted to give a good stab which here involve the major blood vessel. We can imagine that the aim was to give good stab to the body of the opponent. But the thigh was injured. The above wound may also be a variety of defence wound when the victim would have raised the thigh.

CASE NO.17: Axe was used in the assault motive was sex jealousy. The deceased had illicit intimacy with another woman. Hence the wife murdered her husband (the deceased). Wounds were incised in nature involving fracture of right mandible. In addition abrasions, punctured wounds were noticed. Internally contusion of cerebral hemispheres and cerebellum were motive. Fracture of base of skull was present. The victim died after 21/2 days due to head injury.

CASE NO.18: The deceased received knife injuries. The motive being money transaction. A deliberate stab was caused which involved the left lung and left ventricle of heart. Hamothorax containing 1400 cc of fluid blood with clots was present. Pericardium contained 50ml of fluid blood. Death occurred within 15 minutes.

CASE NO.19: Knife and stick were used. Previous enmity was the motive. Stab wound of abdomen, incised wounds were noticed. In addition simple abrasions were caused. Some of the wounds showed partial healing. The stab present over the left iliac fossa injured the peritoneum and small intestine. Surgery was done. But death followed after 8 days due to infection, peritonitis as a result of intestinal injury.

CASE NO.20: Knife was used. Motive was over money transaction. Multiple stab wounds and incised wounds were produced. One stab wound over the stomach pit region entered the liver. Another stab wound entered the left side pleural cavity without injuring the lung. Peritoneal cavity contained 70G of clotted blood with 400 cc fluid blood. Left pleural cavity contained 250 ml of fluid blood. The injuries proved immediately fatal.

CONCLUSION:

Murder is in general a great crime. In the discussion of murder cases it is seen how the motive for the murder is small end petty in nature after which the murder occurred. Sometimes the murder occurred due to sex basis like adultery, rape etc. In some cases only one deliberate injury is caused injuring the organs like heart, lung and multiple viscera. The weapon mostly used are knives, since it is handy and easier to carry them, In few cases there are many injuries caused

by cutting weapons like knife, dagger, Aruval. It shows either the strong premeditation, discloses the relative strength by receiving many injuries (defence wounds). In some cases, blunt weapons are used like, stick, iron rod not excluding the feet. The victim received blunt injuries to the head, abdomen and rarely the chest. The cause of death is head injury with fracture of skull, intracranial haemorrhages of various kinds and cerebral lacerations⁴.

In few cases persons were burnt by dousing Kerosene and setting fire to. This sort of crime of burning for dowry purposes has recently increased. Even some times the body is charred to death making it difficult to arrive at the cause of death, while charred bodies are brought forth for autopsy⁵. The role of forensic pathologist is great and a thorough and pains taking autopsy can yield information of about the crime. Here experience and vast knowledge count. A visit to the place of occurrence of the crime, a knowledge of deceased marital life, the habits of the husband and inlaws etc. should be taken into accounts in the investigation.

In theft, and rape, asphyxia is produced by constricting forces applied to the neck, or homicidal forces applied to the nostrils and mouth interfering with respiration and rendering the victim helpless. In these types of cases if asphyxia is severe, death occurs within a short time or instantaneously.

Murder by poison does occur. Even drugs have been used to kill the unwanted person by using insulin, sedatives. In some murders spade, axe, and heavy long arrivals and stones have been used. We can expect shop injuries involving the back severing of the head and mutilating injuries to the bones and many viscera., causing instantaneous death.

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